

## REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 27 and 28 remain pending in this application, with Claim 27 being independent.

By this Amendment, Applicants have amended Claim 27. Applicant submits that support for the amendments can be found in the original disclosure, and therefore no new matter has been added.

Claims 27 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,617,487 (Yoneyama, et al.). Applicants traverse this rejection.

As recited in independent Claim 27, Applicants invention is directed to an image processing method including, in part, an image input step of entering an image including an object to be extracted, and an outline setup step of setting a closed outline in a predetermined shape which encloses the object to be extracted.

The Office Action cites Yoneyama, et al. as describing an outline setup step of setting a closed outline in a predetermined shape. Specifically, the Office Action refers to the square- and/or belt-shaped outlines disclosed in that patent, which are shown in Figures 5 and 9. Applicants submit that those square- and/or belt-shaped outlines do not correspond to the closed outline of the present invention.

The closed outline of the present invention has a predetermined shape which encloses the object to be extracted. As shown in Figures 5 and 9 of Yoneyama, et al., a plurality of the square and belt shapes are provided along the outline of the object. Each of

those shapes encloses a small portion of the outline of the object. None of those shapes encloses the object to be extracted.

Consequently, the system described in Yoneyama, et al. involves a user setting a plurality of square- and/or belt-shaped outlines for different portions of the outline of a single extraction object. In the present invention, a user may set one closed outline around the extraction object.

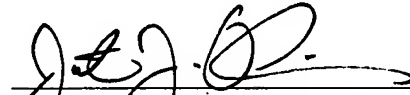
Accordingly, Applicants submit that Yoneyama, et al. fails to disclose or suggest at least the features of an outline setup step of setting a closed outline in a predetermined shape which encloses the object to be extracted, as recited in independent Claim 27.

Claim 28 depends from independent Claim 27, and Applicants submit it is also allowable for the reasons discussed above with respect to independent Claim 27. In addition, Claim 28 includes additional features which further distinguish it from Yoneyama, et al. Applicants request favorable and independent consideration thereof.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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